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RUEHNM/AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT IMMEDIATE 0321
RUEHOU/AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU IMMEDIATE 0312
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S E C R E T BAMAKO 000102

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TAGS: [ML](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#)
SUBJECT: MALIAN PRESS REPORTS THAT GOM RELEASED AQIM
DETAINEES

Classified By: Ambassador Gillian A. Milovanovic, for reasons 1.4 (b) (d).

11. (SBU) On February 19, the Malian newspaper l'Independant carried a front page news story stating that in an extraordinary session beginning at 6:30 a.m. on the morning of February 18, the judge presiding over the court of first instance of Bamako's Commune III released four Al Qaeda in the Lands of Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) detainees. In his statement, the judge said the detainees had been arrested in April 2009 for illegal possession of firearms and, as they had not been charged with any other crime in Mali, had served their sentences, and could be released. The four detainees were listed as Algerian national Mohamed Ben Ali, Algerian national Tayed Nail, Mauritanian national Beib Ould Nafa, and Burkina Faso national Houd Karifo. The article noted that the release of the detainees will facilitate the release of French hostage Pierre Camatte, whom AQIM has threatened to execute on February 20 if the four AQIM detainees were not freed.

12. (S) At a dinner on the night of February 18, French Ambassador Michel de Reyverand spoke about various aspects of the Camatte hostage situation on and off throughout the evening, including about the difficulties encountered with Camatte's family, elements of whom were estranged one from another. He received more than half a dozen text messages on his cell phone and three or four phone calls during the course of the evening, which he implied were related to the crisis. When the conversation turned to Malian resolve in dealing forcefully with AQIM, he said several times and pointedly that if Mali does not begin to get serious, the big donors -- France, the European Union, and the United States -- should jointly threaten them with cutting off all foreign assistance.

13. (S) On February 19, Algerian DCM Mohamed Seoudi phoned the Embassy to ask whether the United States had seen the news report in l'Independant. Seoudi said that the report had too much detail to be anything but true, but acknowledged that he had not confirmed its veracity. He said Algeria had retained up until the very last a shred of hope that Mali would not release the detainees, as the Algerians had made numerous appeals to their Malian counterparts that any such a release would entail a violation of international law and explaining the irrationality of negotiating with terrorists. He said he had personally delivered the demarche requesting the extradition of the two Algerian detainees to the Secretary General at the Malian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

and had been asked to wait. After two months of waiting, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs had informed him that the GOM had searched all of the regular detention facilities in Mali, and had not located the individuals Algeria was seeking to extradite.

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